

[View this email in your browser](#)



Volume #25 Issue #1 - October 25, 2019



**Scott Wissinger, forever in our memories
and hearts**

sudden passing has left us all in shock. Scott was a friend and mentor to us at Creek Connections, always making sure we were getting the support we need and helping out every year at student research symposium. Everyone who worked with him knew how much of a jokester he was. His never-ending dad jokes always brought a reluctant smile to your face, because the joke was so bad you had to laugh. Scott was more than a mentor to his students; he was a role model and friend. He will be missed dearly by his coworkers and students who he has been mentoring for the past 32 years at Allegheny. A celebration of life will take place November 9 at 11 am in Ford Chapel on the Allegheny College campus. *Above photo: Scott Wissinger (left) showing Cochran High School students a fish collected from Woodcock Creek in May, 2014.*

Current in the Creek:

Creek Camp is now Freshwater Academy!



We may have changed the name, but not the way we immerse high schoolers in the French Creek watershed to explore the unique ecology as well as environmental careers. We will have two sessions to choose from starting on a Sunday and ending on a Friday. We'll let you know when the dates are chosen and the application is open!

French Creek Cleanup 2019!



By Grace O'Malley, Allegheny College

Every French Creek Cleanup is a success, and this year was no different! On Saturday, September 7, hundreds of volunteers gathered at the Voodoo Brewery Compound after collecting over 40,000 pounds of trash from the French Creek waterway. There were also dozens of volunteers working at the Voodoo site, helping with things such as unloading trash from vehicles, working the weigh station, and of course making sure the picnic went smoothly and cooking us all wonderful food!

The corporate competition winners and the lucky group that took home the hellbender traveling trophy this year was Acutec, who brought in over 2,500 pounds of trash! The community group big winner was Meadville Bulldog Hockey with 50 participants and over 11,000 pounds of junk removed from a ravine. The most unusual item this year was a Tigger figurine brought to us by the Seton Scavengers.

This year included a new element to the cleanup: land stewardship activities. The Allegheny College Women's Cross Country team volunteered their time to clear and reestablish a trail along French Creek Valley Conservancy's Smock Riverwalk property. The Allegheny College Students for Environmental Action helped FCVC staff put up signs on the perimeter of a conservation easement property. These projects were a hit!

Many thanks to all of the volunteers, whether they picked up trash, helped maintain local trails, and worked at the picnic. The French Creek watershed will continue to be a community treasure.

Meet our new Creekers!



Kinsley Greenlaw is a first-year biology and global health studies double major and is on the pre-health track at Allegheny College. She plans on attending medical school to study to be a doctor. She loves any outdoor activities including hiking and kayaking. She is also a member of the varsity women's lacrosse and field hockey teams. Fun fact: her first word was No! Her favorite creek animal is the Northern Red Salamander, and she is very excited to start her academic career at Allegheny as well as working with Creek Connections.

Eva Kerr is a first-year student at Allegheny College, planning to study environmental science and biology, specifically marine sciences. Fun fact: her first word was ocean! Her biggest goal while being at Allegheny is to see a hellbender, and her second goal is to graduate! She is excited to be a Creeker so she can help foster a positive and educated relationship between water resources and kids. Her biggest fear while

Brinnah Porada is a junior biology major at Robert Morris University. She is also considering adding a minor in environmental science. This is her first time being involved with Creek Connections, so she can't wait to meet everyone and find out more about the organization! Fun fact: she just recently realized that she'd like to have a career working with the environment. She initially wanted to be a dentist, but she discovered that she passes out when she sees people bleeding, so hopefully that doesn't happen at all here!

Molly Gilleland is a junior at the University of Pittsburgh studying environmental science and education! Fun fact: she enjoys scuba diving and has been stung by a coral (which she didn't know was possible). She looks forward to meeting everyone and having a good year with the students!

Testing Tip



By Molly Gilleland, University of Pittsburgh

Something that may stand out while performing water chemistry tests this fall is high values for the Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) and Conductivity data.

Although it may seem concerning, it's totally normal and to be expected during this time of the year. In the fall, we experience lower amounts of precipitation, meaning that less water is going into our streams aside from the flow that comes from groundwater. With this change in water volume comes a change in TDS concentrations and conductivity. The actual amount of TDS does not increase or decrease, but since there is less water to be dissolved into, the

swimming pool versus a bucket of water. If you were to pour one cup of salt into each of these vessels, you could conclude that the concentration of salt in the bucket would be higher than the concentration of salt in the swimming pool. The salt in the swimming pool is at a smaller proportion compared to the salt in the bucket of water. When there is higher TDS in our creeks, we can expect there to be a proportionate increase in conductivity as well because of the decrease in total water volume. Be sure to note the units for the conductivity reading. The meter will shift from $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ to mS/cm when the conductivity is high. Please record this when submitting data.

Meet a Module



By Gretchen Barbera, Allegheny College

In the **Basic Water Chemistry Module**, there are many different tests that help students discover the properties of their watershed through real scientific experiments. In this module students will be testing for temperature and noting its effect on the rest of the tests in the kit. In our game “pH People”, students will act out the process of pH change as if they were atoms. Students will also be able to better understand the levels of pH and what they mean by testing household substances and placing them on the pH scale. In pH Test #3, the activity explores the realities of acid rain by comparing the pH of rain to the pH of the watershed. pH can really affect the growth of organisms in a watershed and that concept is explored in pH Test #5,

Subscribe	Past Issues		Translate ▼	RSS
<p>emphasized in the game “Plants, Fish, and pH,” which helps students understand how pH is affected by respiration and photosynthesis of organisms in a watershed. Other pH activities in the module include measuring the pH of melting ice cubes, and experimenting with acid buffering.</p> <p>Other tests in this module explore the different nutrients found in the watershed, including phosphate and nitrate, how they got into the waterway, and their effect on the water quality. The complicated processes of the nutrients are broken down in “Nutrients: Nutrition or Nuisance,” a game of musical chairs that helps explain how phosphorus and nitrogen move through systems. The module also includes nitrogen testing that allows students to measure the nitrate levels in different places. Another activity has students mimic what it would be like to live in turbid water by making blurry glasses. Students will also measure the turbidity of the water with filters and do an activity that covers soil erosion and how it clouds water and adds nutrients. The last parts of the module have students testing for differences in hardness, which ultimately helps them understand the geology of their region. Overall this module is jam-packed with fun activities that will get students excited about science through hands-on, easy-to-learn, fun games and tests that will inspire the next generation of scientists. For module availability please look on the Creek Connections website then please make your request on the online forms. Thank you!</p>				



Wendy, Laura and The Creekers wish you a wonderful year in the Creek!

Creek Connections is supported by:

Allegheny College, Educational Improvement Tax Credit Program, the Frick Fund of the Buhl Foundation, Grable Foundation, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's 2019 Environmental Education Grants Program and private donors.



Our mailing address is:

520 North Main Street, Meadville, Pennsylvania 16335

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).